

'Upcycling'

The inspiration for this project came about when recently moving home. The accumulation of clothing items was clearly expedient to my needs as a user. Many items were unused, others outgrown and so a process of selection and discrimination was undertaken. The results of the decision to retain or to dispose of specific garments was undeniable, there was far more to be disposed of than kept.

This led me to contemplate the nature of waste garments and further research led to some alarming facts.

For example annually 1.17 million tons worth of clothes are purchased in Japan, and 1.06 million tons disposed of. Calculated per head of population, these results show, 10kg being bought and 9kg being thrown away each year. The total annual volume of waste textiles (cloth, thread and so on) generated annually by Japan is 2.07 million tons. These statistics are from the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry dated from 2005

In the UK according to Futerra, 1.5 to 2 million tons of shoes and clothes are thrown away annually, and 75 percent of those are disposed in landfills or burned, adding to underground waste and carbon emissions

A similar figure exists in the U.S, where Americans throw away more than 30kgs of clothing and textiles per person per year, and clothing and other textiles represent about 4 percent of the weight and 8 percent of the volume of municipal solid waste in the U.S. it is even estimated that 4 to 5 million people could be clothed with the clothes thrown away annually in even a small country such as Finland.

The question was how could my own collection of discarded and unworn garments, be disposed of without adding to the growing environmental problems of waste. 'Upcycling'. Seemed to be the most practical and efficient concept. The concept was devised by William McDonough and Michael Braungart in the book 'Cradle to Cradle' which is a study of ecologically intelligent design and can be defined as follows;

"Upcycling is the practice of taking something that is disposable and transforming it into something of greater use and value"

This concept seemed to be the perfect solution as by utilizing unwanted garments there is an opportunity to not only reduce our individual carbon footprint, but to re-invent, re-make and re-model products that develop personal creativity and a closer relationship to the products that we possess, and if well conceived could be of greater use and value. The final garment is constructed from mens denim jeans and jackets, mens shirts, and found pieces of fabric.

process	deadline
Design development/Muslin	Jan 3 2010
Completed pattern	Jan 9th
Completed garment	Jan 16th
Photograph	Jan 17th
Competition Deadline	Jan 18th